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COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

I am writing about the recently released draft of the Chesapeake Bay Strategy and Goals Framework as required by the President's Executive Order. President Obama has shown tremendous leadership by making Chesapeake Bay restoration a top priority during the first year of his Administration. As you and the other federal agency partners continue to develop new strategies to restore the Bay, I want to stress that citizen stewardship and the promotion of environmental education must be a significant part of any effort to revitalize and sustain the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake 2000 Agreement made these priority goals but they have received very little attention in the draft strategy or in the larger debate over Bay restoration.

There are currently 17 million residents in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and that number is only expected to increase in the near future. If these individuals are not part of the solution, they will overwhelm our efforts to solve the Bay's problems. We must ensure that all residents have better access to the Bay, an understanding of their personal connection to the Bay, and a strong knowledge of what steps they can take to be stewards of the streams and rivers that connect to it. If each individual within the watershed were to contribute to clean-up efforts, even in small ways, the aggregate would yield significant results in moving Bay restoration forward.

In particular, two current Bay programs currently exist that help foster citizen stewardship of the Bay. The National Park Service's Chesapeake Bay Gateways explicit mission is to help individuals access, enjoy, understand and appreciate the Bay's resources and engage in their stewardship. The EPA's Small Watershed Grant program has also been very effective in engaging communities in small scale conservation and restoration efforts. These programs should continue to be focused exclusively on building citizen stewardship and receive more attention and resources. In addition, we must build on these programs to take citizen stewardship efforts to the next level. Very simple steps could include, but are not limited to, establishing a "Save the Bay Home" standard that will let individual homeowners know how they can reduce impervious surfaces on their property or better reduce runoff; providing technical assistance or other incentives to local communities that wish to implement Bay friendly zoning ordinances

so individuals are not prohibited from doing what is right by the Bay; or creating a Citizen Steward of the Year Award that will draw attention to citizen Bay restoration efforts. I hope to work with you to further develop these concepts and encourage citizen stewardship as part of the reauthorization of the EPA Bay program.

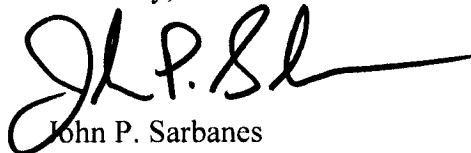
Robust environmental education that focuses on Chesapeake Bay restoration is a down payment on the next generation of stewards, advocates and scientists. The Chesapeake 2000 Agreement envisioned every school student participating in a meaningful Bay or stream outdoor experience in the watershed before graduation from high school. The agreement also sought to forge partnerships with the Department of Education, local schools, and institutions of higher learning to develop school curricula and university programs. For a relatively small investment of federal resources, we can help schools ensure that young people have an appreciation for the Chesapeake Bay, knowledge of the challenges facing the Bay, and an awareness of the economic, social and cultural benefits it provides for this region. More focus is required here to formalize environmental education in the watershed and meet these goals.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Bay Watershed Education and Training program is a good example of the federal contribution in this area. The Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature is the model for state efforts to inform and activate young people. The Chesapeake Bay Strategy and Goals Framework must look to build upon these efforts. Bringing the Secretary of Education or a designee into the Federal Leadership Committee could help bring more focus to this area and foster collaboration with state and local education officials to develop a more formal Bay watershed environmental education strategy.

Citizen stewardship and environmental education must be a part of any successful Bay restoration strategy. But they can be implemented without the political complexities of many other proposals that will be necessary to Save the Bay. As we continue to pursue a framework that protects water quality, I hope we can work together immediately to improve the Bay program in these areas. The result will be improved awareness, reduced pollution and an engaged populace that will ensure future gains are not reversed by apathy.

Thank you for your continued support of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. We must act to protect this irreplaceable national treasure before it is too late. I look forward to working together as this effort moves forward and am hopeful that we can enact meaningful change and turn the tide in our Bay restoration efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.P. Sarbanes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress